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ADM-10.1
Memo for Record

DD/S&T-1790-64

18 June 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting on Disclosure of U.S. Satellite Reconnaissance
Programs and Capabilities

1. The following individuals met on 17 June 1964 in the Office of U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Department of State, to consider the desirability of revealing U.S. satellite reconnaissance capabilities to the Soviet Union and to discuss the manner in which such revelations would be handled:

Department of State:

U. Alexis Johnson, Chairman
Ambassador Llewellyn E. Thompson
Leonard C. Meeker, Legal Advisor
Wreatham E. Gathright, Policy Planning Council
George C. Denney, Jr., Deputy Director, INR
Raymond L. Garthoff, Spec. Asst. for Soviet Bloc Political-Military
Affairs

Arms Control and Disarmament Agency:

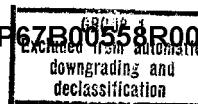
Adrian S. Fisher, Deputy Director
Dr. Herbert Scoville, Jr., Assistant Director (Science and Technology)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration:

Robert Seamans, Associate Administrator

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White House:

Charles Johnson
Spurgeon Keeny
Edward Welsh, Executive Secretary, National Aeronautics and Space
Council

Department of Defense:

John T. McNaughton, Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)
Arthur Barber, Deputy Assistant Secretary (Arms Control)
Colonel Marshall E. Sanders, ISA
Brockway McMillan, Director, NRO

Central Intelligence Agency:

Dr. Albert D. Wheelon, Deputy Director for Science and Technology
R. Jack Smith, Assistant Director for Current Intelligence

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2. At the request of Mr. Johnson, Mr. Fisher of ACDA outlined broadly a proposal for "legitimizing" satellite reconnaissance. The proposal was for the creation of an international organization to be responsible for the storage and, possibly, readout of photography submitted to it by the U.S. and USSR. Both parties would continue to operate their own satellite reconnaissance systems and the quality and quantity of the photography submitted to the organization would probably remain a unilateral decision. It was not contemplated that material of the highest resolution be disclosed by the U.S.

3. In the course of a long and involved discussion of U.S. objectives in the proposed exposure of satellite reconnaissance capabilities to the USSR and Soviet motives in making public its operation of space reconnaissance systems, the CIA view was sought. Dr. Wheelon described, in general terms, the Agency view set forth in the 15 June memo prepared by a DDI/DD/S&T group under the chairmanship of [redacted] Mr. Smith noted that an important aspect of the CIA position was that the

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USSR has not yet committed itself on an endorsement of satellite reconnaissance and that CIA was reluctant to embark on any disclosure scheme without assurance that the USSR would not exploit such disclosures to the detriment of the U.S. intelligence collection program. For that reason, CIA feels that the tacit acceptance now prevailing is satisfactory and is preferable to a possibly adverse Soviet reaction to official disclosure of the U.S. program.

4. Dr. Wheelon informed the Committee of the Director's view that if the USSR were to come to the U.S. with a formal proposal for disclosure, the U.S. might be in a better position to assess the risks and advantages of revealing U.S. capabilities. He also noted that we were now able to describe the Soviet satellite reconnaissance program in some detail and that a recent CIA document could be made available.

5. The following consensus emerged from the Committee discussion:

a. That some initiatives on the part of the U.S. would be desirable to achieve public acceptance of satellite reconnaissance and, possibly, legal legitimacy.

b. That the thrust of the U.S. initiatives should be directed at the Soviet satellite reconnaissance program, rather than the U.S. program, in an effort to impress the USSR that Soviet secrecy practices are not infallible, to elicit a positive Soviet position on disclosure, and to acquire detail on Soviet capabilities.

c. That to assure support to the U.S. in achieving these objectives, the NATO Advisory Council and the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees could be briefed on the Soviet satellite reconnaissance program in as much detail as possible at the SECRET level. The CIA was asked to provide its memo on the Soviet satellite reconnaissance program to the Committee membership and to prepare a proposed briefing for the NAC and Senate Committees.

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d. That to anticipate questions concerning the U.S. program which would be generated by the foregoing briefings, a talking paper should be prepared by the National Reconnaissance Office on what could be imparted to the NAC and Senate Committees in a manner that would not imperil the U.S. program if inadvertently leaked. The departure point for this discussion, it was agreed, would be an analysis of recent Soviet statements on the substitution of satellite reconnaissance for manned aircraft overflights of Cuba and an explanation of why such substitutions are not feasible.

e. That a draft proposal incorporating the points noted above be prepared by Mr. Johnson for consideration by each interested agency.

6. Other conclusions of the Committee were:

a. To put aside, for the moment, the proposal for a private approach to Chairman Khrushchev to reveal the fact of and the success achieved by the U.S. satellite reconnaissance program. The Department of State was assigned responsibility for developing contingency plans in anticipation of new overtures for the exchange of satellite photography by Chairman Khrushchev.

b. To recommend that a recent Rand Corporation report on the use of satellites for the verification of arms control agreements, based on unclassified sources, be published in modified form. Dr. Scoville was asked to prepare and coordinate comments on this document for transmittal to the Rand Corporation.

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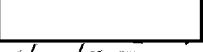
c. Mr. Johnson and Dr. Scoville reported that Roswell Gilpatrick had advised them that he had been asked to prepare an article on satellite reconnaissance for the New York Times, and that he had requested guidance and assistance. It was agreed to suggest to Mr. Gilpatrick that his article be delayed until the Fall of 1964 when the effect could be assessed of the proposed briefings of NATO and the Senate and the publication of the Rand report.

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R. Jack Smith
Acting Deputy Director (Intelligence)


Albert D. Wheelon
Deputy Director
for
Science and Technology

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